

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested in light of the above amendments and the following comments. The specification has been amended to correct an informality noted by the Examiner. Claims 14 and 18 have been amended to correct informalities related to antecedent basis. No new matter has been added as a result of these amendments.

The Examiner has objected to the disclosure for containing informalities. The specification has been amended as appropriate, thereby resolving the objection. Applicants are not aware of any other informalities in the disclosure. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The Examiner has objected to claims 14, 15, 18 and 19 as lacking antecedent basis. The claims have been amended as appropriate, thereby resolving the objection. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejection of claims 1-16 and 21-33 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by Rabinski, U.S. Patent No. 6,480,651. Applicants respectfully assert that Rabinski is not available as prior art against the claimed invention.

In particular, the claimed invention claims priority to JP 2001-053401, filed in Japan on February 28, 2001. A certified copy of the priority document was filed concurrently with the present application. A translation of the priority document including a statement of accuracy is enclosed herewith, thereby perfecting the priority claim. A review of the translated specification and figures reveals that the priority document is substantially equivalent to the present disclosure. As a result, the present invention is entitled to the filing date of the priority document, which is February 28, 2001.

Rabinski, by contrast, has a U.S. filing date of July 13, 2001 and, thus, is not available as prior art under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) against the claimed invention. Therefore, the rejection should be withdrawn. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejection of claims 17-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Rabinski, U.S. Patent No. 6,480,651. As noted above, Rabinski is not available as prior art against the claimed invention, and therefore, the rejection should be withdrawn. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Appl. No. 10/084,785

Amdt. dated October 16, 2003

Reply to Office Action of July 21, 2003

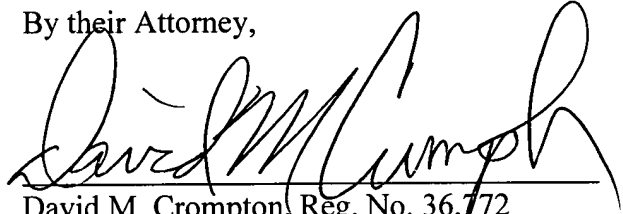
Reexamination and reconsideration are respectfully requested. It is respectfully submitted that all pending claims are now in condition for allowance. Issuance of a Notice of Allowance in due course is requested. If a telephone conference might be of assistance, please contact the undersigned attorney at (612) 677-9050.

Respectfully submitted,

Atsushi Miyake et al.

By their Attorney,

Date: 10/16/03

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David M. Crompton", written over a horizontal line.

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